

# Committee on Resources

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**Statement of Mark A. Limbaugh**

**Director, External and Intergovernmental Affairs**

**U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Bureau of Reclamation**

**Before the**

**House Resources Committee**

**Subcommittee on Water and Power**

**On H.R. 1598, Irvine Basin Surface and Groundwater Improvement Act of 2003**

**May 22, 2003**

My name is Mark Limbaugh and I am the Director of External and Intergovernmental Affairs for the Bureau of Reclamation. I am pleased to appear before this Subcommittee to provide the Department's views on H.R. 1598.

H.R. 1598 would amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act (Public Law 102-575), commonly called Title XVI, to authorize the Secretary of Interior to participate in projects within the San Diego Creek Watershed in California and for other purposes.

Reclamation has had some preliminary discussions with the Irvine Ranch Water District about proposed surface water treatment, groundwater treatment, and brine disposal components of their project. However, H.R. 1598 authorizes the design and construction of the project before Reclamation or the project sponsors have completed a feasibility study that meets the legal requirements of Title XVI. Reclamation requires that feasibility studies be completed first to determine whether these particular projects warrant Federal construction authorization. Therefore, the Department believes the legislation to be premature and cannot support H.R. 1598 at this time.

The Department also believes that this legislation would likely place an additional burden on Reclamation's already tight budget. With the tremendous backlog of existing Title XVI projects, we do not support the addition of new projects at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H.R. 1598. That concludes my statement and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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